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istituto affari internazionali
88, viale mazzini • 00195 roma
tel. 315892 - 354456 • cable: Intaffari-roma

Joint Meeting

I A I - CHATHAM HOUSE

Southern Europe and the Mediterranean:
the cases of Italy and Yugoslavia

Manziana, 20-22 November 1975

SOUTH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND THE SUPERPOWERS

THE SOUTH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND THE SUPERPOWERS (1)

A common political guideline for assessing as a whole the problems of the South European countries can be found only outside of them.

In strategic terms they represent the periphery (or the relatively marginal areas) of vaster systems, gravitating around the USA and the USSR, whose principle fronts are in central Europe and the Middle East.

As far as trade, investments and labour markets are concerned they are connected to the Nine and, in particular, to Germany. The multinationals that still invest in this area do so with an eye to the wider markets of the EEC.

In energy and monetary terms they depend equally on the US (and the stronger European countries) and on the OPEC countries.

Even culturally, Mediterranean unity is a dream which ended over fifteen centuries ago, and which is contradicted by the growing association of their customs, studies and history to those of the rest of Europe, confirming the disintegration of the ancient "Mediterranean world" and the shift north of Europe's cultural "barycenter".

Even among themselves the South European countries have little in common. The number and quality of vertical ties (those which link the single South European countries to

(1) We are referring to Portugal, Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece and Turkey, and we consider the other Balkan States and France connected to Southern Europe by special ties.

external powers) are far superior to the number and quality of horizontal ones (those which link the single South European countries to each other).

The internal political life of these countries is regulated by the policy lines of vertical allies, to which their own international programs (of foreign policy, defence, economy, etc.) are linked. There have been no recent examples of Mediterranean politics following horizontal policy lines, except for a few "imperialist" attempts by the Italians during the Fascist period and a few local conflicts (Greece-Turkey). These countries, therefore, constitute neither a homogeneous region, nor a whole in some way coordinated that tends to integrate the different national realities. Nevertheless, together they constitute a "problem" and this problem calls for political decisions which must, at least in part, be homogeneous and interrelated. They require, in other words, common "crisis management".

This affirmation needs explaining. At first glance, in fact, one could sustain that just because of the diversities we have pointed out it would be better to deal separately with each single national case, avoiding useless generalisations that could have harmful effects.

In contrast to this way of thinking, it is possible to sustain that:

- while the political history of the South European countries tends to underline the differences among the various national situations, making any generalisation difficult,
- the vertical ties with external powers tend to assim-

late the problems in an integrated scenario of crises making it necessary to confront the problems of southern Europe as one whole (and to a certain extent, making these problems one whole).

This conviction is based on the consideration that the crises and changes that southern Europe is going through are only in part the result of the internal evolutions of the local societies and economies. To a great extent they are also the result of more general international crises and of European evolution: that is, they are greatly influenced by the vertical ties which, through the centuries, have become of binding importance to the South European countries. Furthermore, in this postwar period these ties have been greatly strengthened and extended.

Southern Europe's involvement in crises and politics which do not have their origins within the area, makes control over and management of internal crises more complicated.

There are different ways of assessing the situation depending on whether it is seen from the point of view of a superpower or that of a Mediterranean nation. From the global point of view American and Soviet military interest in the Mediterranean is obvious. The two powerful fleets, American military presence in the NATO countries and Spain, the British bases, Soviet and American military aid, the substantial arms sales, are clear indications of the Mediterranean area's strategic importance. Southern Europe, in particular, is closely bound by important military pacts (Portugal, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey by the Atlantic Alliance, the bases in Malta, Cyprus and Gibraltar which are associated with them, Spain's ties with the US), and is directly in contact with the

problems of East-West equilibrium (with Bulgaria and Rumania of the Warsaw Pact; with neutral Yugoslavia and Albania; with the USSR bordering on Turkey). However, the military equilibrium of this region is not determined only by the East-West conflict.

On the contrary, local problems are assuming growing importance. Schematically speaking, one could note two other important parameters besides the East-West conflict: the problem of development (the North-South conflict) and the institutional problem (civil wars, coups d'état, changes of internal political balance). Both of these parameters influence the political choices of the south European countries: often towards objectives different from those which the East-West parameter would desire.

The situation in the Mediterranean is considerably differentiated from that of central Europe. The East-West frontier which divides Germany is at the same time military, ideological, political and represents a division between the two different economic systems. In the Mediterranean the divisions are not so clear. Up until now the military component has seemed to prevail over the others; however, the political evolution of NATO's south flank and the crisis in bilateral relations between the USA and single allies (Greece, Turkey, Portugal... Italy?) no longer permits a solely military discourse.

In that respect, the central European front's gradual isolation from the southern front makes it possible today to consider the two fronts almost fully autonomous. The Vienna talks on the mutual reduction and balancing of troops began by explicitly excluding an examination of the southern sector.

The study recently conducted by the WEU on the consistency of the Central European front (rapporteur: Ulrich de Maizière) makes no mention of a necessary link with the South European front; it concentrates instead on the Atlantic links, without considering an eventual move from the south. It would seem, that is, that from a strategic point of view the World War II experience (when, in Europe, the first big allied offensive started from the south and from Africa) is considered an "accident" owing to particular political conditions and that, in reality, the central front is considered largely autonomous at least of its southern flank.

The entire Mediterranean front of NATO cannot remain indifferent to this view. It follows that its functions tend also to be autonomous of the events of the central front.

In the past years, however, the USSR has greatly altered its military capacity, developing an imposing military fleet and a great number of arms which are half way between tactical and strategic (whose use can be either nuclear or conventional, and whose range of action is often "intermediate"): the SAM missiles (which it also gave to Egypt), the Backfire bomber, the new aircraft carriers, etc.

Many of these forces have been deployed throughout the Mediterranean front and in its immediate surroundings. In fact, it seems that this area is the theatre of a sort of arms race.

We therefore have at the same time: growing military concentration in the Mediterranean, and the detachment of this area from the central European front.

The military importance of this area is also changing with the changes in armament technology. As the military

forces in this area increase, the importance of the Mediterranean for US strategic forces may diminish. Not only will the new Trident be able to threaten objectives in the Soviet Union from outside the Mediterranean area which today the Polaris and Poseidon could reach only if launched from the Mediterranean, but the development of satellites and new detection techniques diminish the role of the FBS (Forward Bases' System).

In the South European countries the new integrated system of radar and satellites for sighting missiles that the US is constructing, could also diminish the strategic importance of the NADGE, and the tactical importance (for central Europe) of the southeastern branch of NADGE.

Therefore, from a general strategic point of view the Mediterranean is becoming relatively less relevant.

The Mediterranean's role must therefore be redefined. Provisionally, the following points can be made:

- in order to have a Middle East policy it is necessary to have some control over the Mediterranean;
- the Mediterranean remains one of the main means of communication between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.
- Despite changing strategic considerations, the withdrawal of forces from the Mediterranean, or a net advantage in favor of one of the superpowers, would make the credibility of the superpowers' European strategies problematic.

These considerations suffice to explain the presence of such large military forces, but they explain neither their actual composition and armament, nor their employment strategy.

For example, it is not clear whether the Mediterranean

is an area of possible "local wars", or only an area connected with the general East-West theatre (as central Europe surely is). It is not enough to say that it is "in part both". First of all, because we have pointed out the existence of a growing detachment of the central and southern fronts, and it is therefore important to know to what extent this detachment has been considered. Secondly, because this might expose the South European countries to excessive risks to their security without clear compensations.

Already, on the Sixth Fleet and in the single South European countries, there are a great number of tactical nuclear warheads. It is probable that the nuclear threshold of an eventual East-West conflict in the Mediterranean would be very low, and it is also possible that such a conflict would originate outside of Europe, in the Middle East, immediately involving the entire Mediterranean area.

What would be the strategic significance of such a nuclear conflict in the Mediterranean for the South European countries?

The Atlantic Alliance's doctrine affirms that the existence of tactical nuclear arms in Europe allows the "flexibility" necessary to make the Alliance's deterrent credible: the Soviets know that there will be a nuclear volley and they know that it is all the more probable since it will not involve from the beginning the American strategic forces. On the other hand, the Europeans know that the Americans will be involved with their nuclear weapons right from the beginning and that this will compromise them in the defence of Europe in a more direct way than if these arms were not present. The tactical nuclear weapons constitute the necessary link

(what Wohlstetter defines as the 'bridge' and the 'firebreak') between strategic and conventional arms and serve to spread the American umbrella over Europe.

In the Mediterranean this reasoning is more difficult to apply. The lesser centrality of this area, the possibility of confrontation in less populated zones or on the sea, the possibility that an eventual war is concentrated clearly in only one country (while an attack on Germany would be seen immediately as an attack on all of Europe), the possibility, finally, of the crisis beginning in an area not explicitly covered by the Atlantic Alliance or the Warsaw Pact, make one think of the real possibility of limited wars in which the use of nuclear arms would have no sense other than the destruction of the countries of this region.

The development of nuclear weapons could complicate this picture. If, for example, SLBMs were destined for non-strategic uses (that is, to be considered, like the French and British SLBMs, arms destined explicitly for the defence of the European equilibrium and no longer for the defence of the global equilibrium), if arms of ambiguous collocation, between tactical and strategic, were developed, such as cruise missiles or medium range bombers, the uncertainty of the role of the nuclear forces in the Mediterranean could be accentuated, without giving these coastal states more security.

On the contrary they would see the opposing arsenals grow and would receive in return no greater guarantees than they presently have.

In conclusion, therefore, the South European countries have no clear strategic collocation in the East-West picture, even knowing that they will necessarily be involved in any

eventual conflict. In other words, there is a lack of balance between the global point of view of the superpowers and the national point of view of the single South European countries.

Politically this lack of equilibrium is accentuated by the crisis of Atlantic politics in the west and that of the Communist movement in the east. Both of these political focal points are losing their magnetism. The South European countries of NATO, with the qualified exception of Italy in the EEC, have not been integrated in a multilateral western political society and have maintained above all bilateral ties with the US. These relations are in a state of crisis corresponding to internal political crises (Greece, Portugal, etc.) but have not been replaced by anything more stable.

As for the Communist countries, they (with the exception of Bulgaria) have evolved an independent attitude, refusing completely or partially Soviet hegemony. Also the most important Communist parties not in government in the Mediterranean countries have developed in the same way.

Even these political ties are not particularly stable in the long run. In the first few postwar years the political forces of south Europe regarded their preferential ties with the USA or the USSR as a point of strength. Internal political balances in Italy and in Greece were based also on these preferential ties. The division between government and opposition forces coincided ideologically with the division between the blocs. Certainly this situation has changed, at least in two different directions. In Italy, Portugal and Spain the so-called "area of government" has been enlarged and no longer coincides with the divisions of the cold war period. It's almost comical to read from Italy Kissinger's recent

affirmations about the danger of the PC's joining the government: not because one can't agree with his analysis but because what Kissinger sees as an hypothesis to reject, has already been for several years a historical reality and thus requires not decisions of principle but concrete decisions of management.

In Greece and in Turkey the nationalist forces have taken the upperhand so that relations with the USA are utilized no longer to consolidate internal equilibrium but to favor their own foreign policies (and in particular their respective policies vis-à-vis Cyprus). Far from constituting an element of stability, they have become an instrument to favor change.

This analysis comes to an interesting conclusion: even though the Mediterranean is a part of the East-West equilibrium, the internal political processes of the South European countries do not correspond to the needs of this equilibrium: they are, in fact, largely independent of it.

That explains to a great extent the many American and Soviet policy errors made in this area and the problems they must confront.

The superpowers' appraisal of the Mediterranean evolution is necessarily conditioned by global considerations (that is, by how East-West relations are going). They therefore tend to consider everything that happens in the Mediterranean as "eccentric", a risk to stability, a jarring note in the international panorama. They tend to reduce these variables to their policy constants, simplifying their analysis of the Mediterranean nations and basing their decisions on a few fundamental criteria (keeping the "balance of power", distinguishing between communists and anti-communists, etc.)

that turn out to be too far away from the actual internal realities of these countries to be able to work efficiently. There remains, therefore, an atmosphere of general uncertainty.

In such a situation of uncertainty the safest choice appears to be a flexible, ad hoc approach to the single problems. For example, the US seems ready to support the Yugoslavian communists, oppose the Italian ones and support the persecution of the Spanish ones. The USSR contemporaneously theorizes the "Cunhal line", supports the conservative Greek government (as it previously supported the colonels) and has good relations with Spain.

All this increases the already accentuated bilateralism which characterizes the international relations of Southern Europe with the Superpowers.

In times of profound crisis or change such bilateral relations are insufficient to guarantee the stability of either the alliances or the South European governments.

The inadequacy of the superpowers' criteria for judging the situations and the subordination of their appraisal of the internal development tendencies to the needs of the East-West equilibrium make "realpolitik" options (brusque, at times surgical, often unpopular) preferable to more open, long-term politics. The result is a double crisis: internal rapidly followed by international (as has happened in Cyprus, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Portugal and as will happen in Spain and possibly in Italy).

This error of perspective committed by the superpowers is partially justified by the reality of the South European countries. As we have said, they have very few common ties and it is difficult to imagine a multilateral system of

security and stability less dependent on external intervention.

Any "collective security pact" in the Mediterranean or even only in Southern Europe, would not only be an illusion but a risk as well. There is no real force on which to base it, capable of resisting determined external pressure. The political situation and the institutions of the single states are not sufficiently stable and are therefore exposed to all winds and capable of unexpected policy reversals. Finally, there is no common economic basis that could make this region independent of Northern Europe, the superpowers or Arab oil.

To think in only Mediterranean terms is therefore nonsense. In fact, no country does and this is why we have underlined the importance of vertical political ties.

This does not mean, however, that such a situation could not evolve in the future. Certainly, the contradiction between the internal evolutions of these countries (that are the necessary premise for their real economic development) and superpower politics is too great to remain unresolved.

Bringing it down to these terms it would seem that there were few ways out: a period of internal agitation followed by a realignment (either following traditional patterns or according to new alliances). In this realignment even Yugoslavia's neutrality (or, mutatis mutandis, Italy's) might find room: in fact, such neutrality would represent but one of the many unknown factors in the area and would be compensated (in the eyes of the superpowers) by the realignment of other countries. There would not be room, however, for an entire flank of neutral South European countries because of the previously mentioned difficulties.

In such a situation the problems of Southern Europe would

remain unresolved. In the first place, the problem of economic development, because the key issue of cooperation between the developed north and the developing south, without which the impoverishment of the South would continue, would not be resolved (or would be resolved negatively). Secondly, the problem of freer political evolution, because the international framework would continue to work as a limit to internal political evolution: the South European countries have to adapt themselves to norms which are not compatible with their internal needs (this goes for eventually neutral nations as well: Yugoslavia's internal evolution is blocked by Tito's having to avoid a political crisis that might lead to Soviet intervention or of the breaking away of the richer, more westernized republics).

In other words, this formula does not offer the political leaderships of the South European countries prospects of development and integration in a vaster international context, even though it keeps alive the reality of all those transnational currents and international needs which hang like dead weights over the life of the South European countries when instead they should be integrated and better controlled by them.

In a certain sense we are today faced with a dilemma analogous to the one in '48-'49. In that period there was a current of thought in the State Department (cf. the opinions of Kennan) which held it more advantageous to maintain bilateral ties with Italy and the other Mediterranean countries, without fitting them into the vaster multilateral context of an Alliance between the USA and central-north Europe. Today the problem is similar. Kissinger's policy exalts the "flexibility"

of ad hoc relations, which in the short term can facilitate relations between the USA and the countries of south Europe but which does not offer these countries a equitable future prospective for integration in an area of not only strategic, but also political and economic stability.

Nevertheless it would be erroneous to reduce South European prospects to a dilemma between subordination or chaos. Especially in the past few years a third alternative has been taking shape, one which has been widely discussed and analysed by the political forces of these countries: western Europe.

It already represents the other pole to which the South European countries are attracted (economically and politically). The Italian experience has shown that the prospect of growing European integration has worked as a stabilizing factor on the political forces. Whereas the decisions made in '49 (for or against the Atlantic Alliance) had created an internal split corresponding to the international one, the European prospect gradually gained the support of new political forces, and today constitutes a largely unitary (and therefore stabilizing) factor in the Italian political panorama.

In these past years EEC policy towards Greece first and towards Portugal and Spain later, proves that they are more aware of the internal evolutions and the long-term possibilities of these countries. And so today the Common Market represents in a way the most important political link between these countries and the West, an alternative (and at least partially, a substitute) to Atlantic ties which have been weakened or are in crisis.

The flexibility shown towards Yugoslavia and Rumania opens the way to better political relations with these countries as well.

From an economic point of view, integration of northern and southern Europe poses the big problems characteristic of relations between developed and less developed (or developing) areas: a striking example is southern Italy. Nevertheless, it is evident that such difficulties remain also because of the absence of political integration: we need only look at the tendencies in commerce, investment, worker migration, etc. Political integration can not but work as a corrective to such tendencies; studies and proposals by the EEC commission have already been made. The political will to actuate such plans has not yet fully matured: that, however, will also depend on the type of proposals and reactions coming from Southern Europe.

It is clear, however, that the European prospect represents a new element and is a way out of the problems of Southern Europe.

This prospect, however, can not be only economic. The military (security) dimension, until now absent, will have to in some way be confronted. Without such a dimension, in fact, a new contradiction would develop between superpower and European presence, with new risks both for the stability of the area and above all for the coherent development of all aspects of Southern Europe.

In conclusion it seems possible to maintain that:

- Southern Europe is in a state of crisis and is changing rapidly;
- it is not possible to "isolate" southern Europe in the

Mediterranean area and neutralize it in some way;

- it is however possible to adjust the international relations in this area, making them more consistent with the internal evolutions, if greater western European political intervention is developed;
- if this does not come about, the external needs and, above all, those of the superpowers and the strategic-military ones, will increase the divisions between the single countries and will make their development more difficult.

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the cases of Italy and Yugoslavia

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Agenda

Thursday, November 20

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| afternoon | - Participants' arrival in Manziana |
| 20:00 | - Dinner |
| 21:00 - 22:30 | - First Meeting |

Friday, November 21

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|---------------|--|
| 9:00 | - <u>First Session</u> : Plausible Alternative for Political Change in Italy and their Foreign Policy Implications up to 1980 (Introductory Paper by Pierre Hassner) |
| 13:00 | - Lunch |
| 15:00 - 18:30 | - <u>Second Session</u> : Plausible Alternatives for Political Change in Yugoslavia and their Foreign Policy Implications up to 1980 (Introductory Paper by Chatham House) |
| 20:00 | - Dinner |

Saturday, November 22

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|--------------|--|
| 9:00 - 12:30 | - <u>Third Session</u> : The Climate of Political Change in Southern Europe: Uniqueness and Generality (Introductory Paper by the IAI) |
| 13:00 | - Lunch |
| afternoon | - Departure of Participants |

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List of participants:FRANCE

Pierre HASSNER - Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris

GREAT BRITAIN

Richard BONE - Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Chris CVIIC - "The Economist", London

Dennison RUSSINOVV - Associate Director, American University Field Service, USA

Hugh SETON-WATSON - Historian, Professor at London University

Andrew SHONFIELD - Director, Chatham House, London

Ian SMART - Deputy Director, Chatham House, London

William WALLACE - Research Fellow, Chatham House, London

ITALY

Roberto ALIBONI - Director of Research, IAI, Rome

Paolo CALZINI - Johns Hopkins University, Bologna

Marcello DE CECCO - Faculty of Economics, University of Siena

Cesare MERLINI - Director, IAI, Rome

Bona POZZOLI - External Relations Office, IAI, Rome

Stefano SILVESTRI - Deputy Director, IAI, Rome

G.F.R.

Heinz TIMMERMANN - Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Cologne

Hans-Jakob STEHLE - Correspondent of "Die Zeit", Rome

Nick VAN PRAAG - Rapporteur

Monika GRIMM - Secretary

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